Mr. Frank Mankiewicz
Hill & Knowlton
901 31 St., NW
Washington, D.C.

7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, Md. 21702
11/10/91

Dear Mr. Mankiewicz,

First, several apologies. I wrote you the enclosed letter as soon as I read the copy of it that had been sent me not knowing your address. I'd also forgotten that I had a new typewriter ribbon. For this reason and because I must sit with my legs elevated and with the typewriter to one side and because ~~right~~ right now my fingertips are cracked, the typing is not what I'd like it to be.

My purpose is not to embarrass you. Nor was that or harming him in any way my purpose in my 2/8/91 letter to Oliver Stone. I do regard what he thereafter did as his doing and his responsibility.

It may not interest you, but I add that among those writing about political assassinations and their official investigations I am alone in eschewing theories that are presented as credible and factual. There is no such theory in any of my seven published books. My work is a rather large and I think you will find accurate study of how the basic institutions of our society, including the media, functioned in those times of great stress and since then. If you want credentials, I will provide them.

Beginning with my first venous thrombosis in 1975 and despite a series of surgeries, several life-threatening, the most recent open-heart surgery with bypasses, I have devoted that energy and time remain to an effort to perfect the historical record of these great national tragedies.

It is my belief that for representative society to be able to work as intended it is necessary for the people to be able to know the truth about major events. Consistent with this I interpret FOIA as making me surrogate for the people with regard to the records I get and I make them freely available to other writers. I do this despite knowing that virtually all will write what I do not agree with. No writer has the right to censor any other writer and I have made no such effort, including by NOT refusing access to this considerable volume of records some of which cannot be duplicated anywhere else.

The controversy in which you are now involved is not going to end before the movie is out or after it is. It has already begun abroad, too.

I ask nothing of you. I expect nothing of you. I write to inform you.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

Dear Mr. Mankiewicz

The New York Times story on the controversy over the Oliver Stone film concludes, quoting you, "I'm trying to present a legitimate position for Oliver Stone in the light of some of the sensational and hostile stuff about him." It also says that one of the reasons you were hired is because of your prior connection with the Kennedy family. The latter fits nicely with his "Camelot" production company and his titling his film, which is not about the martyred President, "JFK." Consistent with this, the coming reprint of Jim Garrison's book, "On the Trail of the Assassins," the one trail Garrison never took, also has been retitled, "JFK."

The story errs, perhaps with assistance, in stating that this controversy is "because the news media have criticized Mr. Stone's defense of Mr. Garrison's conspiracy theories."

I do not know what Mr. Stone has told you. I also do not know whether or not you care about what your clients have you defending. Forgotten but not lost in history is one mistake you made when you worked for Robert Kennedy and he was assassinated. You told reporters that he had asked you to read the books critical of the official JFK assassination and that you had told them there was nothing in them. You could not have said this honestly. My first of six books on the JFK assassination, which is an analysis of the Warren Report and espouses no theories at all, also the first book on that subject, has no error in it. There are few errors in the books that followed mine and you could have read. I write to let you know what you are now involved in, not your client's version but the truth. Truth, alas, is something he has trouble stating even by accident.

I am the one who started the exposure of what Mr. Stone is really up to. He knows it, whether or not he told you, because I warned him before he started shooting. I'll enclose my letter to him of February 8, 1991. If he has not given you the other letters I wrote him and if you'd like copies, I'll provide them.

As you can see, I told him, of personal knowledge, as soon as I learned that he was basing his book on Garrison's unabashed dishonesty in rewriting his own history that he would be producing a fraud and a travesty. This was not because Garrison advanced conspiracy theories but because he lied over and over again and because Mr. Stone, beginning not later than when he promoted this film and his "Doors" when it was released, said, and I use his words, that his new film would tell the people their "history," "who" killed their President, "why" and "how."

If Mr. Stone had not said that his film would be non-fiction he would have the unquestionable right to say anything at all that he wants to. But the truth is that he said what I quote above over and over again for quite some time. Long after he knew the truth from me he repeated these exact word, save for a single qualification, "we think," before "who," to a New Orleans reporter. This was after he filmed in Dallas.

Going along with this representation and many other things Mr. Stone did to tell the world that he was sticking scrupulously with the actualities, like remodeling the building from which all the shots were fired, according to the official "solution," he also said over and over again that he had the most "respected researchers" working for and with him. This was a knowing and deliberate lie. With the single exception of those he named, and he has avoided naming names, of eminent pathologist, he surrounded himself with those who know nothing at all about the fact that has been established, some, notoriously entirely indifferent to fact. He has relied on those who invent theories that for the most part are untenable. Nuts! Ask if you want details.

Consistent with this, he has boasted, again repeatedly, that he has included "all" the "information" that has come to light since the Warren Report. A bigger lie even he would have trouble stating, and again I have personal knowledge.

By means of about a dozen FOIA lawsuits I've obtained about a third of a million pages of once-withheld government assassination records, mostly those of the FBI. About a quarter of a million pages relate the the JFK assassination. Not only is it well known in the field that I make all these records available to all writers, Stone did know this. He has not asked for access to a single page, nor has he asked me to mail him a copy of any.

As you know if you read George Lardner's story in the Washington Post, the story that triggered all those that followed, you know that I was his source. I had been given a copy of the script- Mr. Stone calls me a thief - and along with copies of my records of my own relationship with Garrison and what I did to prevent one of his more monstrous adventures, this was the basis of Lardner's story. Despite Mr. Stone's contrary claims, there is no error in Lardner's story. Nor is it in any way unfair.

When the Post printed a second version of what Mr. Stone asked it to publish, I wrote Mr. Stone again. That he responded to through his "research coordinator." It was a thinly-hidden effort to bribe me. I rejected it, that letter without response, as are also several other letters when I learned that he had the colossal gall to be telling reporters that I was "helping" him, a lie repeated by his co-author, Sklar.

Whoever led Bernard Weinraub to write in the Times that "at issue in the film... is the contention that the assassination was the result of a conspiracy" succeeded in getting him to misstate the facts and misdirect attention. Nor is the defense of Garrison's theories the issue. (Imagine, charging an innocent man with conspiring to kill a President on the basis of a theory only and a movie then being made of this truly outrageous indecency!)

The real question is of Mr. Stone's misleading more people than anything since the Warren Report and in the course of this making a hero of the man who perpetrated this fraud and travesty, or Mr. Stone's right to rewrite our tragic history and tell the world it is a true account.

My letter of February gave Mr. Stone all the time he needed to do a different movie on the same subject. I offered him all the additional information he needed, asking nothing in return. He asked me no question, wanted no other information, and proceeded with what this, too, makes it clear that he intends, exploiting and commercializing "the crime of the century," the crime that turned the world around.

On this basis alone, Mr. Stone is his own victim. There has been no campaign against him by the "establishment" press, as he has represented. He even claims that because he says that Gardner is a "CIA" reporter, another lie, the CIA is out to get him and block his movie.

I am not CIA. It, the FBI and other agencies I have sued do not like me. And I know of no criticism published after I started all of this that is not factual. All the misstatements, usually overt lies, have been by or on behalf of Mr. Stone.

He has as much right to public-relations counsel as he has to a lawyer and you have every right to provide him with this counsel.

My purpose in writing you is to let you know what you are really into. As I told him, I tell you, I'll answer any questions to the best of my ability and you are welcome to access to not only all I got by this FOIA litigation but to my records relating to Garrison.

In this regard I encourage you to read with care what I told Mr. Stone about how Garrison was about to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the JFK assassination and how, when asked by his staff, I prevented that, and what he then did, all so utterly falsely handled in both the book and the movie.

This alone - and Mr. Stone did not question it - told him all he needed to know about how much he could depend on Garrison's word about anything - yet he ignored it and proclaimed that he would record their history for the people and tell them who killed their President, why and how.

Sincerely,

Harold